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Newsletter



OFFICE FOR FOOD AND FEED CONSERVATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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WASHINGTON ROUNDUP

We've been urging consumers to buy foods that are in seasonal abundance. It's a good principle to follow since prices usually go down when supplies go up. For your guidance here is a list of foods that are expected to be relatively plentiful in most of the United States during March:

Fresh citrus fruits, apples and winter pears; fresh cabbage, carrots and celery; canned citrus juices, grapefruit segments, peas (lower grades), pumpkin, sweetpotatoes and tomato juice; most dried fruits; frozen peas; walnuts, filberts and pecans; honey; peanut butter; fresh and frozen fish; eggs; and stewing chickens.

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The importance of emphasizing the seasonally abundant and less expensive items in the family food budget, as an anti-inflation measure, is highlighted in a recent report on the national food situation by the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

Retail food prices rose to a record index of 210 in January, 1948. This figure is 26 points above the 184 recorded in January of last year.

Meat output in 1948 may be about 2 billion pounds below 1947. "If consumer incomes remain high," the report continues, "meat prices in 1948 could increase somewhat from present levels as meat supplies decline."

Eggs will be plentiful in 1948, and domestic consumption is expected to be a near record. Chicken supplies during the first half of the year are expected to be greater than in the same period of 1947. But with higher feed prices, fewer chicks will be raised for flock replacement. As a result, chicken supplies in the last half of 1948 will be moderately below those of the same months of 1947. Retail prices of chicken during the first half of 1948 are not likely to change much from present levels.

Per capita supplies of milk and dairy products available for consumption in 1948 will be slightly less than the 793 pounds consumed in 1947. During the first half of the year, prices of most dairy products will average higher than a year earlier.

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It's a sound policy for the sake of national security and welfare not to gamble on conditions remaining favorable for world food production. This is one reason why there should be no slackening in food and feed conservation efforts.

This point is driven home by reports from the Soviet agricultural press. As you know, Russia has agreed to export considerably more grain than was thought likely at the beginning of the current marketing year. Now apprehension is voiced in the Soviet press because of the almost complete lack of snow in the southern regions of European Russia, where the bulk of the winter wheat is grown, and insufficient snow cover in some districts of Asiatic Russia.

Although it would be premature to sound an alarmist note, the potential danger of heavy winter-killing of grain in the Soviet Union must be considered in the world food situation.

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Buying less expensive cuts of meats protects your own pocketbook and also contributes to the national anti-inflation program. For careful buying, however, homemakers must be able to identify the different qualities of meat. But the Department of Agriculture has found that the use of such terms as Grade "A", "AA", and other letters is causing increasing confusion in the minds of homemakers.

Meat that may be called Grade A in one retail market may be of entirely different quality from that called Grade A in another store. Housewives can know what grade meat they are getting by insisting upon buying meat with the federal grade imprinted on it. The federal grades are "Choice," "Good," "Commercial," and "Utility." This is the easiest and most reliable guide consumers have in selecting meats.

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Note to farmers:

High-moisture corn that has wintered safely in cribs may be in danger of spoiling as spring advances. An immediate checkup on all cribs thought to contain over-moist corn will minimize farmers' risk of heavy losses. The Department of Agriculture recommends that, where there is any doubt about corn being in danger of moisture damage, farmers take their corn samples to a nearby grain elevator, the local County ACP office, or a State PMA office.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

The need for continued grain conservation was emphasized recently in an editorial in the Washington Post. The editorial reads in part:

"....As far as current conditions can be relied upon as an index, the prospect is for material relief in the world food shortage during the latter half of 1948. But the situation is still touch and go up to June 30. Were it not for Russian grain exports, for example, several European countries would now be in a desperate plight. But Russian exports are at best

imponderables which cannot be counted upon. Moreover a relatively small amount of grain can make a lot of difference when it comes to the question of holding the line or cutting bread rations--a problem European nations still may have to decide.

"Our emphasis still must be on grain conservation. If false optimism should lead to a squandering of grain that in turn prevented us from making it possible for Europe to bridge the gap, then we certainly should have nothing to be exuberant about."

ECONOMY MEATS IN DEMAND

A story in the Sunday (March 7) New York Times reports evidence that consumers are buying the less costly cuts of meat. This practice is a means of combatting inflation and conserving grain for shipment overseas.

The Times article, written in Chicago, states:

"Livestock and meat markets in recent weeks have changed drastically because consumers have become more price-conscious than they have been for several years, meat distribution experts at the stock yards said today. The shift of demand to "economy meats" since Jan. 1 has been the widest since pre-war days and the effects of the change have been far-reaching.

"Retail buying has turned packers' demand toward hay-fed and half-fat cattle and away from fat corn-fed stock that was in brisk demand last year. Demand also is for lean pork and light hogs. More shoppers wish meat with the least amount of waste-fat and cuts requiring a minimum of trimming even at sacrifice of quality, it was said."

FREEDOM GARDENS

The Extension Service of Washington State is in the midst of an all-out campaign for the raising of Freedom Gardens. Circulars are being distributed through county offices, the Washington State Federation of Garden Clubs, the Washington State Federation of Women's Clubs, and farm program directors. These circulars together with mats (for use as column heads or advertising layouts) are also being sent to all newspapers in the state.

The State Garden Club reports that the demand for family garden space in vacant lots and other available areas around Seattle is stronger this year than it has been at any time, even during the war. Cecil Solly, who edits a syndicated garden column, says he's been receiving more requests for information about vegetables than he ever has in the past.

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The Iowa Extension Service has asked 29 state-wide organizations to lend support to the Freedom Garden Program. Iowa State College will provide information, including the "Iowa Garden Guide", to back up the efforts of local leaders in counties.

County agents have been requested to visit each town and city of over 2,500 to confer with local leaders regarding organization for land procure-

ment and the garden program. Garden committees will survey land possibilities and make plots available to families requesting them. Local headquarters for information are to be set up. And spring garden meetings, summer garden clinics, storage demonstrations, and educational meetings have been suggested as part of the program.

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The Northern Pacific Railway Company reports that it will continue to grant garden permits for portions of unused right-of-way at a nominal charge to employees or others who may desire them.

GENERAL BEN LEAR RESIGNS AS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Completing a fine record of achievement as chairman of the Memphis (Tenn.) Citizens Food Committee, Lt. Gen. Ben Lear (Ret.) resigned from that post when other demands on his time left him no choice.

Major James J. Pleasants, Jr. praised the diligent efforts of Gen. Lear in behalf of food conservation. He declared: "General Lear has done an excellent job in making the people of Memphis food conservation conscious. The city is grateful to Gen. Lear for the excellent work he has done...."

Mrs. W. C. Galloway, who has been assistant to Gen. Lear, has assumed charge of the committee's activities. Her contribution to the success of the Memphis program is well recognized.

RAT CONTROL

Goshen County of Wyoming has launched a rat-control campaign, highlighted by an intensive one-day attack against these grain-destroyers on a county-wide basis. Each community in the county is contributing toward the one thousand dollar fund to provide poison bait for "Rat Day." Citizen aid in the campaign is being solicited by radio broadcasts, newspaper articles, circular letters, motion pictures, and lectures.

We will keep you informed on events in Washington and the programs of local committees and organizations. We welcome your suggestions and invite you to send us news of your activities in the voluntary food and feed conservation program.

